



NAEP Teacher's Guide

A Resource Highlighting the 2009 National Assessment of Educational Progress

Introduction

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), also known as The Nation's Report Card™, is the only ongoing, nationally representative measure of student achievement. Since 1969, NAEP has measured the academic progress of students nationwide in a number of key subjects and has reported the results to the American public.

NAEP plays an important role in American education. The U.S. Department of Education administers NAEP based on the authorization from Congress. Congress uses NAEP data in the development of educational policy. State leaders and state educators use NAEP for information on student achievement in their states and other states. Valid comparisons can be made using NAEP since all students take the same assessment in a given subject and are measured in the same manner, as opposed to state assessments which differ widely from state to state.

As a teacher...

You play a vital role. You can make an important contribution to this effort by encouraging your students to participate and do their best. Each student represents a larger group of students nationwide.

Participation by every student selected is essential to ensure that national performance is accurately reflected.

You help improve our understanding of what influences student learning. If your students are selected to participate in the assessment, you will be asked to complete a short survey focusing on your teaching experience and instructional environment. Surveys can be completed online at <http://naepq.com> or by hand. NAEP will use the information to report on current instructional activities in America's classrooms.

You can use NAEP as a resource in the classroom.

After each assessment, some test questions, their answers, and how students performed on each are released to the public. Previously released questions, scoring guides, and samples of student responses are available on the NAEP website (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/itmrls>). From that site, you can print questions that can be used in the classroom. You can also contact your school's NAEP School Coordinator for the Sample Questions booklet, which provides more detailed information regarding the upcoming assessments in mathematics, reading, science, and other subjects.



The Assessment...

Frameworks guide the development of NAEP.

NAEP assessments are based on specific frameworks that define the knowledge and skills to be measured and the types of questions to be included. The National Assessment Governing Board, which oversees and sets policy for NAEP, develops these frameworks. The Governing Board draws from many individuals and organizations including assessment specialists, researchers, teachers, and others. Content experts designated by your state education agency may also help review test questions before they are included in the assessment.



Students are asked a variety of questions. NAEP assessments feature a mix of multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Students are also asked other background questions, including their television-watching and reading habits, their class size, the content of their courses, and other relevant background information. Information from these questions helps provide context to the NAEP results.

Each student takes only a portion of the full assessment. Students are randomly selected to participate in one of the subjects and will spend approximately 90 minutes taking the assessment. Data from students throughout the United States are combined to produce nationwide results for all grades that are being assessed in a particular subject.

NAEP is designed to cause minimal disruption for teachers and students. No advance preparation is necessary. Trained field staff, employed by contractors of the U.S. Department of Education, administer NAEP.

Participation is voluntary, but very important.

Student participation in NAEP is not mandatory, and participating students may omit any question or part of the assessment. The NAEP random sampling process is designed to select students to represent the geographic, racial/ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity among American schools. Full participation is essential to ensuring an accurate, nationwide picture of student achievement.

Including all students is essential. To ensure that student achievement is accurately reported, NAEP encourages the participation of students with disabilities and English language learners (SD/ELL). Many accommodations are allowed during the assessment. Teachers of SD/ELL students selected for the assessment are requested to complete a brief questionnaire, online at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/bgquest.asp> or by hand, to assist in determining whether or not these students will participate in the assessment.

NAEP is confidential. No one involved in administering NAEP keeps personally identifying information on schools, teachers, or students after the tests are completed and the booklets leave the school.

NAEP Findings

In its 40-year history, NAEP has produced many reports, chronicling trends over time in the performance of 9-, 13-, and 17-year-olds and fourth-, eighth-, and twelfth-grade students. Information is reported, for example, by race/ethnicity, gender, region or state, and type of school, and by both achievement level and scale scores. You can access data from previous assessments at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nde>.

NAEP also disseminates information about data collected on student, teacher, and school background questionnaires. This information can be used to inform parents, the public, and education policymakers about our nation's educational environment.

In 2009, students will take assessments in mathematics, reading, and science.



Recent NAEP Findings...

Reading in 2007

- Eighth-graders whose teachers reported asking students to discuss interpretations of readings once or twice a month or more had higher scores in reading than students whose teachers reported that they never or hardly ever did so.
- Fourth-graders whose teachers had at least five years experience teaching at the elementary or secondary level scored higher than students whose teachers had fewer than five years experience.

Mathematics in 2007

- Eighth-graders whose teachers reported they had an undergraduate or graduate major in mathematics education scored higher than students whose teachers did not have a major in mathematics education.
- Fourth-graders whose teachers reported spending 3–4.9 hours a week on mathematics instruction scored higher than students whose teachers spent less than 3 hours a week and higher than those who spent 5 hours or more.

Science in 2005

- There was a positive relationship between fourth-graders' average science scores and the frequency of their teachers asking them to do a science demonstration.
- Eighth-graders whose teachers reported having a leadership responsibility for science education at their schools scored higher than students whose teachers did not have this leadership responsibility.

Civics in 2006

- Twelfth-graders who indicated they discuss current events in social studies scored higher than students who indicated that they do not discuss current events.
- Eighth-graders whose teachers reported participating in a professional development workshop or training session on history scored higher than students whose teachers did not participate in this type of professional development activity.

Geography in 2001

- Fourth-graders whose teachers used maps and globes almost every day scored higher than students whose teachers used them 1-2 times per week.
- Eighth-graders who used the internet to some extent for social studies research scored higher than students who did not use the internet for social studies research.
- Twelfth-graders who used a computer to create geography charts and maps scored higher than students who did not use a computer to create geography charts and maps.

U.S. History in 2006

- Fourth-graders whose teachers indicated that they place heavy emphasis on the development of American democracy scored higher than students whose teachers placed little to no emphasis on the subject.
- Eighth-graders whose teachers reported having a Master's degree scored higher than students whose teachers reported having a Bachelor's degree.

Caution: These results cannot be used to establish a cause-and-effect relationship between student achievement and instructional environment or teaching experience. A complex mix of educational and socioeconomic factors may interact to affect student performance.





For more information...

Online: Download NAEP reports, access sample questions, and learn about upcoming assessments at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>.

Phone: For prompt field staff support on these or other matters, call the NAEP Help Desk at 800-283-6237.

In your school: Contact your NAEP School Coordinator.

In your state: Contact your NAEP State Coordinator (<http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/states>).

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“Because each state sets different standards and uses different assessment tools to gauge student achievement, it can be difficult to get a clear picture of how students across the nation stack up against each other. NAEP allows us to determine how students fare in comparison to their peers across the country. Within the framework of a standardized test, NAEP allows us to objectively measure what students know and can do.”

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